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## CHAPTER 2

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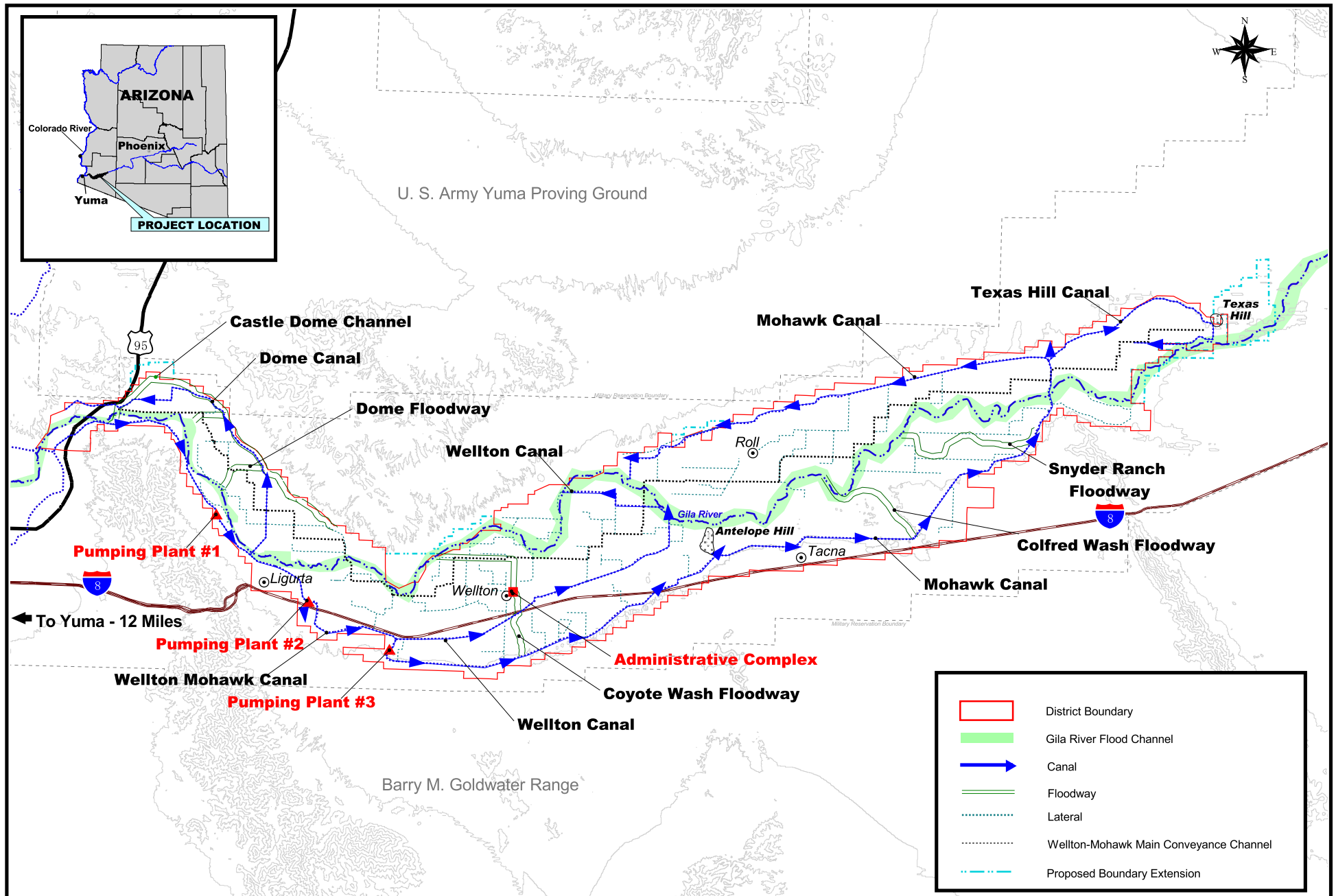
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**TABLE 2-1 FACILITIES TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE DISTRICT**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Description</b>
Wellton-Mohawk Canal	The main supply canal from the GGMC into the District. The Wellton-Mohawk Canal has a capacity of 1,300 cfs and extends approximately 18.5 miles.
Wellton-Mohawk Pumping Plants 1, 2, and 3	Pumping plants on the Wellton-Mohawk Canal with a combined pump lift of 170 feet.
Wellton-Mohawk Laterals and Relift Pumps	A system of distribution laterals beginning at the Wellton-Mohawk Canal and serving the southwestern area of the District, including two relift pumps.
Dome Canal, Laterals, and Relift Pumps	A branch canal beginning at the Wellton-Mohawk Canal with distribution laterals serving the western part of the District, including ten relift pumps.
Mohawk Canal	A supply canal that extends east along the south side of the District, crosses the Gila River near the east end of the District, and continues west along the north side of the District for a total length of approximately 46.8 miles.
Mohawk Laterals and Relift Pumps	A system of distribution laterals beginning at the Mohawk Canal and serving the eastern and northern areas of the District including the Texas Hill Canal and twenty-four relift pumps.
Wellton Canal	A supply canal that extends through the District on the south side of the Gila River for approximately 19.9 miles.
Wellton Laterals	A system of distribution laterals beginning at the Wellton Canal and serving the southern area of the District.
Protective Dikes and Floodways	Various earthen dikes on the upslope side of various canals providing protection against overland runoff from rainstorms, and floodways to convey stormwater flows to the Gila River. The aggregate length of dikes is approximately 85 miles.
Wellton-Mohawk Main Conveyance Channel	A concrete-lined drain extending through the District conveying drainage water to MOD Station 0+00 at the west end of the District.
Drainage Wells and Observation Wells	Wells with pumps and power transformers to control groundwater depth and observation wells to monitor groundwater depth.
Drains and Sump Pumps	Lined ditches and pipelines that convey drainage water from groundwater wells to the Main Conveyance Channel including seven pumps at tile drain sumps.
Gila River Flood Channel and Adjacent Mitigation Facilities	A system of levees and grade control structures along the Gila River with mitigation facilities consisting of oxbow ponds and associated water diversion facilities. The length of the flood channel is approximately 56.3 miles and the aggregate length of the levees is approximately 105 miles.
Wellton Camp	The headquarters complex at Wellton, Arizona containing the District office, repair shops, garages, and employee housing.
Employee Housing	Twelve houses at various locations throughout the District.

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## Wellton-Mohawk Title Transfer

### Map 2-1 Facilities Proposed for Transfer

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Not to scale. For illustrative purposes only.

## 2.2 PROPOSED ACTION/PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative would transfer facilities, rights-of-way, and certain lands within or adjacent to the Gila Project. Other public lands within or adjacent to the Gila Project would be made available for purchase by the District under the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative. The Wellton-Mohawk Title Transfer Project is an administrative action that does not involve construction, modification to facilities, or operational changes. Implementation of the proposed title transfer would require Reclamation and the District to jointly prepare and execute a contract to transfer the title to the facilities of the Division and lands in or adjacent to the Gila Project. Preparation of the contract would include administrative actions such as:

~~Preparation of an inventory of facilities and rights-of-way to be transferred.~~

~~Preparation of an inventory of other lands involved in the title transfer.~~

~~Completion of an environmental review of the proposed title transfer to assess the effects, if any, on the natural, cultural, and/or socioeconomic environment. Included within compliance with NEPA are the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).~~

~~Preparation of environmental documentation as required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA or Superfund) 42 USC § 9601 et seq.~~

~~Amendment of contracts between Reclamation and the District, which address facilities, operations, irrigable lands, and water supply.~~

~~Issuance of quitclaim deeds for lands transferred to or purchased by the District.~~

~~Registration of the quitclaim deeds with Yuma County.~~

### 2.2.1 Facilities to be Transferred

The facilities to be transferred consist of irrigation and drainage systems, protective dikes and floodways, the Gila River Flood Channel and related mitigation areas, and various buildings and structures used in the operation and maintenance of the Division. The facilities are listed in Table 2-1, and the locations of the principal facilities are shown on Map 2-1.

### 2.2.2 Lands to be Transferred or Made Available for Purchase

The lands included in the Proposed Action include rights-of-way and easements for the facilities described in Table 2-1, and certain other public lands within and adjacent to the Gila Project. The aggregate area involved in the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative is approximately 57,418 acres. Lands will either be transferred to the District at no cost or

purchased by the District at fair market value. The lands have been divided into the following categories based on the way they were acquired and their current use.

### *2.2.2.1 Rights-of-Way and Easements for Facilities*

For discussion, rights-of-way and easements are divided into two groups:

- ~~2~~ Irrigation and drainage system rights-of-way, including irrigation and drainage systems and other facilities associated with irrigation and return flow operations, and

- ~~2~~ Flood channel rights-of-way, including the Gila River Flood Channel and mitigation areas.

Irrigation and drainage systems rights-of-way include land used to construct the facilities and provide access for the operation and maintenance of the irrigation system. This also includes flowage easements on private land along protective dikes and stormwater floodways. These rights-of-way and easements typically occupy narrow parcels along canals, dikes, floodways, and other facilities. The rights-of-way and easements were acquired in the 1940s and 1950s by Reclamation via withdrawals and acquisition of GVPD, MMWCD, and private lands and flowage easements.

The flood channel rights-of-way contain low-lying federal lands used for the Gila River Flood Channel and the adjacent mitigation areas developed under the Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit issued to the District by the Corps. These Reclamation lands consist of (1) withdrawn lands; (2) acquired GVPD lands and federal lands; and (3) private lands acquired under P.L. 93-320.

The federal rights-of-way and easements comprise approximately 29,091 acres. Except for rights-of-way on withdrawn lands, the costs associated with rights of way acquisition were included in the District's repayment obligation. The rights-of-way on withdrawn lands were assigned to their respective facilities. Consequently, the federal rights-of-way and easements would be transferred to the District without additional cost.

### *2.2.2.2 Lands and Rights-of-Way Acquired from GVPD and MMWCD*

This category consists of lands that Reclamation acquired from the GVPD and the MMWCD for Division purposes, but that have not been used for rights-of-way or farm unit development. These lands comprise approximately 10,563 acres in and adjacent to the District. Their acquisition costs were included in the District's repayment obligation, and would therefore be transferred to the District without additional cost.

### 2.2.2.3 Additional Land Acquired or Withdrawn by Reclamation

This category includes 7,839 acres of land acquired by Reclamation from private landowners under the Salinity Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-320) and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-512). Additionally, 9,925 acres of land was withdrawn from the public domain in the 1940s for Division purposes but not used for rights-of-way or development of farm units. Some of these withdrawn lands had their irrigable classification rescinded under P.L. 93-320. The total amount of land in this category is approximately 17,764 acres. This land is currently under Reclamation's administration within and adjacent to the Gila Project. The acquisition cost of the lands in this category was not included in the District's repayment obligation. Therefore, under the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative, the land would be made available for purchase by the District at fair market value.

Table 2-2 lists the lands and acreages included in the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative by category. The land acquisition process for the Division and the determination of the method of transfer for each type of land is discussed in more detail in Appendix D. Map 2-2 shows the locations of the land categories to be transferred. Detailed maps showing the locations of the lands by category are presented in Appendix C.

**TABLE 2-2 LANDS INCLUDED IN WELLTON-MOHAWK TITLE  
TRANSFER**

Land Category and Type	Type of Transfer	Approximate Acreage
<b><i>Rights-of-Way and Easements for Facilities</i></b>		
Land for irrigation and drainage systems, including protective dikes, floodways, the administrative complex, and employee housing.	Transfer at no additional cost	18,437
Gila River Flood Channel lands and adjacent mitigation areas.	Transfer at no additional cost	10,654
<i>Subtotal for Category</i>		<i>29,091</i>
<b><i>Lands and Rights-of-Way Acquired from GVPD and MMWCD</i></b>		
GVPD and MMWCD lands and rights-of-way acquired by Reclamation but not used for Division purposes.	Transfer at no additional cost	10,563
<i>Subtotal for Category</i>		<i>10,563</i>
<b><i>Other Lands Acquired or Withdrawn by Reclamation</i></b>		
Lands acquired under P.L. 93-320 and P.L. 100-512 that were not used for Gila River Flood Channel rights-of-way.	Purchase	7,839
Withdrawn lands that were not used as rights-of-way or for development of farm units.	Purchase	9,925
<i>Subtotal for Category</i>		<i>17,764</i>
<b><i>Total</i></b>		<b><i>57,418</i></b>

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### 2.2.3 Contractual Provisions for Title Transfer

Under the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative, the District and Reclamation would execute a contract specifying the facilities and lands to be transferred and clarifying relevant provisions of existing contracts and agreements. The District and Reclamation may also amend the existing contracts covering Division facilities, operations, irrigable lands, and water supply, as necessary. The contractual provisions associated with the title transfer would address the public interest criteria cited in Section 1.4. Existing easements (e.g., roadways and gas, water, and power lines) on lands to be transferred would not be affected by the transfer or purchase of federal lands.

### 2.2.4 Post-Title Transfer Operation and Maintenance

After the title transfer is complete, the District would continue to operate the facilities under the established irrigation, drainage, and flood control program. The allocation of Colorado River water and hydropower to the District would remain unchanged by the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative. The District would continue to submit an annual “water order” to Reclamation for Colorado River diversion, and Reclamation would continue to apportion water to the District in accordance with existing contractual arrangements and the *Law of the River*.

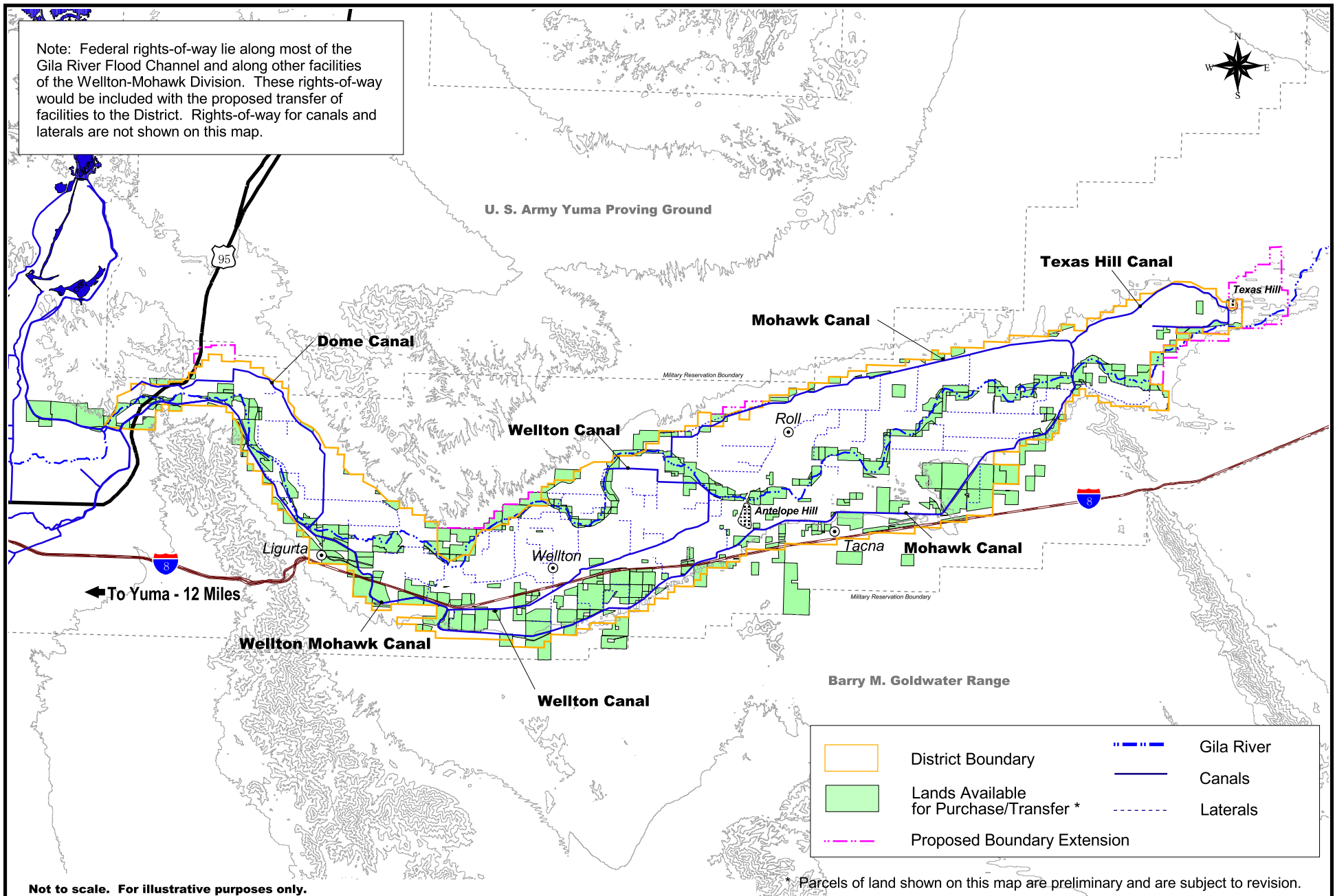
The District agrees to accept Reclamation’s goal of limiting the ARFs discharged into the MOD to the design capacity of the Yuma Desalting Plant (YDP), and that the District water management activities will reflect this goal to the extent that the goal remains relevant. Reclamation will dispose of ARFs pursuant to the U.S.-Mexico Water Treaty of 1944, Minute 242, P.L. 93-320, and through Reclamation’s water management program in the Yuma-Transboundary Area. As in the past, potential variations in ARFs beyond the control of the District (e.g., flooding) would be coordinated with Reclamation to minimize undesirable effects.

The flood control facilities would continue to be operated in accordance with state and federal agreements. The provisions of the permit issued under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to the District govern the operation and maintenance of the Gila River Flood Channel and the adjacent wetland mitigation facilities through 2050. The operation and maintenance of the flood channel and the adjacent wetlands will not change under the conditions of the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative.

Public access to the facilities and rights-of-way would not change under the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative. Access to levees and dikes for recreation and other public uses would continue, subject to existing operational constraints. Public access restrictions on maintenance roads along major canals and drains would continue as needed for public safety.



Note: Federal rights-of-way lie along most of the Gila River Flood Channel and along other facilities of the Wellton-Mohawk Division. These rights-of-way would be included with the proposed transfer of facilities to the District. Rights-of-way for canals and laterals are not shown on this map.



Not to scale. For illustrative purposes only.

## Wellton-Mohawk Title Transfer

## Map 2-2 Lands Proposed for Transfer or Purchase

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## 2.2.5 Facilities and Lands Not Proposed for Transfer

In addition to the federal facilities and lands described above, the District contains some federal facilities and lands that are not proposed for transfer under the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative. Such facilities include the following:

~~2.2.5.1~~ Electrical switchyards and other power facilities owned by the federal government that are part of Western's regional power transmission and distribution network; and

~~2.2.5.2~~ The federally owned portion of Antelope Hill, which contains archeological remains of cultural significance to Native American tribes and communities. Antelope Hill is the only TCP currently identified in the project area (additional discussion of Antelope Hill is provided in Section 3.7).

## 2.3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM ANALYSIS

Several modifications to the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative suggested during the scoping process were considered but eliminated from detailed analysis. The suggestions submitted, and the reasons for their elimination from analysis, are summarized in the following sections.

### 2.3.1 Guarantee the Water Supply to the Cienega de Santa Clara

Commenting parties suggested guaranteeing deliveries of the current water supply for the marsh habitat in the Cienega de Santa Clara in Mexico through the following additions to the Proposed Action.

~~2.3.1.1~~ The District's agreement to continue its current level of ARFs.

~~2.3.1.2~~ The District's agreement to secure replacement water if its ARFs decline.

~~2.3.1.3~~ Reclamation's commitment to bypass the ARFs around the Yuma Desalting Plant.

The disposition of the District's ARFs is outside the scope of the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative.

### 2.3.2 Retain Federal Ownership of Wetlands Habitat

Commenting parties suggested providing greater assurance that the wetlands habitat along the Gila River would be preserved in the future by retaining federal ownership of the Gila River Flood Channel.

The District currently owns approximately 5,000 acres of the bed and floodplain of the river. The District also operates and maintains facilities to wetland mitigation sites along the river,

including some with drainage flows derived from irrigation in the District. This modification would perpetuate the overlapping jurisdictions that impede prompt responses needed to react to flood flows in the Gila River, and the inefficiencies in administrative efforts. Regardless of the title transfer, federal oversight of wetlands habitat located within the jurisdiction of Waters of the United States would continue under the District's Clean Water Act Section 404 permit.

### 2.3.3 Include a Water Supply Management Component

The following addition to the Proposed Action was suggested to enhance water management flexibility in the Yuma-Transboundary area in order to accommodate potential future shifts in water policy and assure a sustainable balance between available water supplies, ecosystem health, and water supply commitments:

~~Develop~~ Develop a water management plan for the District based on available water management techniques including water transfers and exchanges, conservation, pricing, conjunctive use, recycling, voluntary, temporary, or permanent land fallowing, irrigation efficiency improvement, and other market-based incentives.

The addition of this element expands the scope of the Proposed Action beyond its intended purpose. The District currently engages in ongoing water supply management and planning activities, and is positioned to address additional water management techniques as the need arises. Other planning efforts are being conducted by multiple agencies that will influence water management in the area, including the evaluation of future Yuma area groundwater management and the development of the MSCP. Enhancement of water management in the Yuma-Transboundary area is more effectively addressed through such broader planning efforts.

## 2.4 SUMMARY TABLE OF IMPACTS

Table 2-3 summarizes the results of the analysis presented in this DEIS. The analysis for each resource or issue listed in the table is presented in Chapter 3.

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**TABLE 2-3 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS**

<b>Resource/Issue</b>	<b>No Action Alternative</b>	<b>Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative</b>
Land Resources	Reclamation lands involved in the project would not be transferred or made available for purchase by the District. The rate and distribution of future land development would be subject to local planning and zoning.	Reclamation would transfer to the District ownership of approximately 29,091 acres of rights-of-way and easements for facilities and the Gila River Flood Channel, and ownership of approximately 28,327 acres of additional land. Future land management goals would integrate the uses of the transferred land into the prevailing agricultural and open space character of the project area. Development for community or commercial purposes would follow the planning envisioned in the Yuma County 2010 Plan.
Geologic Resources	Development of sand and gravel operations would continue in the project area, as demanded by local and regional development. Any development on federal lands would require NEPA compliance, and, if located within the jurisdictional waters of the United States, a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit.	The potential for development of sand and gravel operations is the same as with the No Action Alternative. Future sand and gravel development on transfer lands outside the jurisdictional waters of the United States would no longer require compliance with NEPA. Future sand and gravel development on transfer lands inside the jurisdictional waters of the United States would still require compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
Soil Resources	Reclamation and District programs would not affect the soil resources and their use in the District for the foreseeable future.	Reclamation and District programs would not affect the soil resources and their use in the District for the foreseeable future. No loss of prime and unique farmland is expected as a result of the title transfer.
Water Resources	There would be no change from the District's current water entitlement or water supply operations.	There would be no change from the District's current water entitlement or water supply operations.
Biological Resources	Any federal action in the project area that may affect a plant or animal species listed as threatened or endangered must continue to comply with Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA.	Transferring lands out of federal ownership would remove the federal compliance requirements with Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, except for the Gila River Flood Channel lands, to which the ESA will apply for the life of the flood channel project.

<b>Resource/Issue</b>	<b>No Action Alternative</b>	<b>Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative</b>
Cultural Resources	Cultural resources on federal lands would remain under federal control and subject to the federal protections provided by the NHPA, ARPA, NAGPRA, and Executive Order 13007.	Cultural resources located on the transferred lands would lose federal protection provided by the NHPA, ARPA, NAGPRA, and Executive Order 13007. The fieldwork program and management plan are contemplated for completion prior to the implementation of the Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative.
Socioeconomic	No changes in the amount of federal land included in PILT payment calculations would occur. The No Action Alternative would not cause a change in employment.	Given the abundance of federal land holdings in Yuma County, the reduction in federal land due to the Proposed Action would not have a significant effect on PILT payments to Yuma County. Commercial and community development on transferred land would not significantly increase the cost of county services over No Action conditions and may increase tax revenues to the county. There would be no effect on employment.
Public Health and Safety	The public health and safety of the District would remain unchanged from current conditions.	No perceived changes in operation after the transfer of title that would affect public health and safety in the District.
Air Quality	The air quality of the District would remain unchanged from current conditions.	There are no perceived changes in operation resulting from the transfer of title that would significantly affect the District's air quality from agricultural or developmental disturbances.
Transportation	Transportation routes and facilities in the District would remain unchanged from their current conditions.	The Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative does not involve any new physical modification or expansion of the service infrastructure that would generate additional traffic or otherwise influence transportation systems.
Recreation	Recreation opportunities in the District would remain unchanged from current conditions.	Potential indirect impacts may result from the Proposed Action associated with the change in ownership of certain lands within the District. The District does not intend to restrict public access to lands proposed for transfer except on tracts that may be developed or established for conservation purposes.
Indian Trust Assets	No Indian Trust assets are known in the project area.	No Indian Trust assets are known in the project area.
Environmental Justice	No environmental justice issues have been identified for the No Action Alternative.	The effects of the proposed title transfer would not be disproportionately focused on minority or low-income populations.